Review of the Month

Lynching of a Negro prisoner in Mississippi, rape of a Negro co-ed by white boys in Florida, and shooting of Negro youths by white hoodlums in Virginia brought a rising cry, North and South, that "This must stop."

On the school front, the Virginia General Assembly adopted a so-called "moderate" plan to let local communities decide the fate of their own schools. It was a defeat for massive resisters, who wanted to abolish schools state-wide, but no victory for integration. It was openly presented as a way to provide "maximum segregation" and still preserve public schools. (Analysis will appear in later Patriot.)

In Little Rock, the State Supreme Court upheld the Faubus school-closing laws, but by just one vote. A federal court was considering the same laws. A federal district court approved a grade-a-year integration plan for Delaware; the NAACP said this was too slow and it would appeal. Prince Edward County, Va., site of one of the original school suits, was ordered to proceed with integration next year; plans were under way to re-open another of the original suits, in Clarendon County, S. C.

The 1957 Civil Rights Act was dealt another blow, when a federal judge in Georgia declared its injunctive procedures unconstitutional in a suit against voter discrimination in Terrell County. The government appealed.

Book Banning, Southern Style

—Photo by Gunter Studio

Attempts at thought-control in the South are reaching into the field of children's literature.

The picture at left is from the jacket of a book that has been banned by the state boards of education in South Carolina and Mississippi.

It shows the author, Miss Alice Cobb, assistant professor of the Department of Church and Community at Scarritt College, Nashville, Tenn. The two little boys with her are tying a symbolic knot of friendship across racial lines.

The book is "The Swimming Pool" (Friendship Press, 257 Fourth Ave., New York City, $2.50), issued by the Commission on Missionary Education, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

It's for children up to 11, and it won the Nancy Bloch Memorial Award for 1957. This award is given annually to the book which best fosters intergroup understanding among children.

The Patriot asked one of its younger readers, Jimmy Braden, 7½, to read "The Swimming Pool" and "review" it. He reported:

"This is a very good book. I like the way Benjy wouldn't go in the swimming pool because his pal, Preston, couldn't go in because he was colored.

"And I like the way they thought up the idea of raising money for a pool everybody could use. And I like the way they cleaned up the neighborhood so everybody wouldn't have to move away.

"And I think it was a nice thing that they gave the money to Angela's mother for an operation and saved her life. I learned it's more important to save somebody's life than to get a swimming pool. The book shows that

(Continued on Page 3)

26,000 March

In a dramatic demonstration, 26,000 young people from 37 states gathered in Washington April 18 for the Youth March for Integrated Schools. They brought petitions signed by 400,000 demanding action.

The Southern PATRIOT

Vol. 17, No. 5

May, 1959

Published by the Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc.

Inside Little Rock

Healing Process at Work

By AMINE DeMILLE

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — This city today is like a human being trying to heal a split personality. It is a painful process, and it's far from over. But the crisis of the past two years has speeded it up.

You could see the split personality plainly during those tense months in the fall of 1957. While the newspaper reporters and photographers hovered around Central High School, a quite different scene was being enacted a short distance away at the Public Library, where I worked.

If the photographers had dropped by the reading rooms there about 3:30 any week-day afternoon, they could have snapped pictures of Negro students from Dunbar High School or Horace Mann, quietly doing their research from the same books and at the same tables as the white students from Central or Hall.

The Public Library in Little Rock was integrated in 1950, following quiet consultation between senior citizens on the Library Board and four Negro educators. In the nine years since, no bombs have been planted, no guards stationed; there has been no tripping of Negroes between the stacks nor nasty name-calling reported to the librarians.

During and since the unexpected explosion of September, 1957, one member of the Library Board has remarked in public and private many times, "The whole thing is incredible!"

Sometimes with tears, sometimes with a wry smile, a great many of us feel the same way. How did this awful thing happen to us?

MRS. AMINE DEMILLE, until recently on the staff of the Little Rock Public Library, is a native of Arkansas, where her forebears settled in 1819. She is a member of the Baha'i Faith.

Little Rock had been steadily advancing in so many ways toward the full participation by colored citizens in the larger life of the community. We were known throughout the South as leading the way.

As early as 1950, the race barriers were crumbling rapidly in intellectual circles. Our city was not unlike Louisville in this. The University of Arkansas Extension Center, located here, had admitted Negro students to its graduate and night courses.

Between classes everybody chatted and drank Cokes together, and white participants were excited by the opportunity to exchange ideas with people of another race and culture.

About this time, the Great Books program was adopted in Little Rock. Practically all the groups had Negro members. We began to know by name, to respect and like our Negro neighbors, many of us for the first time.

Evidently encouraged by these first successes, more and more organizations began to advertise non-segregated activities. A Little Rock Film Society was organized on an interracial basis and showed foreign and unusual films to mixed groups of a hun-

(Continued on Page 4)

Danger Signal

There is again grave danger that Congress will nullify the Supreme Court decision invalidating state sedition laws—powerful weapons against Southern integrationists. Last year such a bill was killed by a single Senate vote, after a nationwide protest descended on Washington. Write your congressman and senators immediately urging them to oppose this and all measures to curb the Supreme Court.

Tennessee Looks Ahead

(By Staff Correspondent)

NASHVILLE — The Tennessee Legislature made news this year by what it didn't do.

Tennesseans had expected a rash of segregation legislation from this session. The new Governor, Buford Ellington, had run as a segregationist.

Many pro-segregation bills were introduced, including measures to close schools slated to integrate.

Only one of the bills passed—and that was a much-watered-down version of a compulsory school attendance repeal. Under the measure passed, the state law stays in effect but under a sort of local-option plan local school boards can soften its enforcement if they want to. It is not expected to have much practical effect.

As to the other proposed bills, they never got out of committee. The reason: Governor Ellington let it be known he didn't want them passed.

What had happened? SCEF Vice President Herman Long of Nashville analyzed it this way:

"I think it is a sign of the times. Ellington is looking to his future, and he knows that the political future in this region does not belong to men who are tied to the past on the segregation issue.

"For one thing, the Negro vote is very important in Tennessee. But Ellington must have decided too that future votes of white Tennesseans won't go either to a man who threw the state school system into turmoil. He was probably thinking of five, 10 and 15 years from now and he didn't want it in his record that his four years as governor were marked by school closings and destruction of the public education system."

A Southern Profile

E. D. Nixon: A Long Struggle

(By Staff Correspondent)

MONTGOMERY, Ala.—E. D. Nixon worked and organized for 25 years before he saw his labors bear fruit in one of the great social upheavals of recent times.

It is generally recognized that the long, steady work of this Negro leader laid the foundation on which the historic bus protest was built.

No one man or group of men was responsible for the protest, of course. Nixon himself says simply: "The time was for it; the people were ready." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who led the successful bus protest, says in his book "Stride Toward Freedom": "The Montgomery story would have taken place if the leaders of the protest had never been born."

But it is also King who describes Nixon in the years preceding the protest as "a symbol of the hopes and aspirations of the long oppressed people of the State of Alabama." He calls Nixon one of the few "fearless men" who "created the atmosphere for the social revolution that was slowly developing in the Cradle of the Confederacy."

For Nixon, these years were marked by physical danger, long hours of tedious work, trips in the dead of night to gather evidence on atrocities

(Continued on Page 3)

MR. & MRS. E. D. NIXON

She said she'd die with him

Virginian Elected

The Rev. William B. Abbot, Norfolk, Va., Presbyterian minister, has been elected to membership on the SCEF board. Mr. Abbot is a leader in integration efforts in Virginia.

The Southern Patriot

The Southern Patriot is published monthly except July and August by the Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc., dedicated to ending segregation and discrimination based on race, creed, color, or national origin. Editorial offices, 4403 Virginia Ave., Louisville 11, Ky.; business offices, Suite 404, 822 Perdido St., New Orleans 12, La.; office of publication, 150 Tenth Ave. North, Nashville, Tenn. Twenty-five cents a copy, $2 a year. Entered as second-class mail matter, Nashville, Tennessee.

THE SOUTHERN CONFERENCE EDUCATIONAL FUND, INC.

President
AUBREY W. WILLIAMS

Vice-Presidents
DR. HERMAN H. LONG
BISHOP EDGAR A. LOVE
MODJESKA M. SIMKINS

Treasurer
HERMAN L. MIDLO

Secretary
DR. JAMES L. HUPP

Assistant Secretary
MRS. FRED ZENGEL

Executive Director
JAMES A. DOMBROWSKI

Field Secretaries & Editors
ANNE BRADEN
CARL BRADEN

VOL. 17. No. 5 MAY, 1959

News in Brief

A 20-year struggle to get an FEPC law in California came to a climax with the passage of one of the strongest laws of this kind in the country. The statute was authored and guided through the legislature without crippling amendments by Assemblyman W. Byron Rumford, Negro legislator from Berkeley. Ohio also recently adopted a strong FEPC statute.

* * * *

From Dallas, Carl Brannin reports that a Negro attorney, C. B. Bunkley, Jr., polled an unprecedented 18,411 votes in a City Council race against a white opponent. Bunkley lost, but it was estimated that at least half of his votes came from white people. "It would seem," Brannin comments, "that there is some lessening of prejudice against competent Negro candidates in Dallas county."

* * * *

At Duke University in North Carolina, 185 of the 225 students in the divinity school signed a petition calling for racial integration in the school. The board of trustees declined to act on the petition.

* * * *

The Georgia Education Association reaffirmed its support for "equal but separate schools," but for the first time in its history there was strong and outspoken opposition to the traditional resolution. The vote was 569 for, 257 against. During a heated floor fight, one teacher called the resolution "absurd" and said, "The era of equal but separate schools is over." Majority of delegates from the area embracing Atlanta voted against the resolution.

In Louisville, Ky., Dr. C. H. Parrish became the first Negro to head a department in a previously all-white Southern university. He was named head of the Sociology Department at the University of Louisville.

* * * *

The Georgia League of Women Voters adopted a resolution supporting integration of schools in preference to closing the schools or defying the Supreme Court.

* * * *

In Charleston, W. Va., the United Church Women have endorsed a plan of action calling for an end to minority group discrimination in employment practices and in places of public accommodation.

* * * *

Protestant churches in Norfolk, Newport News and Virginia Beach, Va., held a combined preaching mission this year on a completely desegregated basis and "with considerable success," according to a report in the newsletter of the Virginia Council on Human Relations.

* * * *

In Texas, the state Conference of College Teachers of English went on record as favoring integration. Also in Texas, Episcopalians voted to integrate their summer camps.

Vote Increased

A three-week intensive campaign this spring increased the number of Negroes registered to vote in St. Petersburg, Fla., by 45 per cent—from 3,317 to 4,821. Congratulations to the Florida Council for Racial Cooperation, which sparked the campaign.

The Southern Myth

Anthropologist Finds No Elite

By MARION PEARSALL

(Departments of Sociology and Rural Sociology, University of Kentucky)

In all the contortions, furious defenses, and unreasoned fears unleashed by the Supreme Court decisions outlawing segregation, a recurrent theme seems to go unchallenged—the claim of "purity" for the Southern past.

Champions of the "Southern way of life" have spoken forcefully, but none has bothered to define the "way" beyond implying that any modification of traditional behavior between the races would somehow destroy the whole society and render life unbearable for white Southerners.

In fact, the "way" is based on a powerful myth—the myth that all the qualities of leadership and virtue are hereditary, found only in the "pure" bloodstreams of "quality folk." The whole hierarchical structure of Southern society pivoted on this myth.

And no matter which segment of the white population was currently perpetuating the model of an hereditary elite, the Negroes were perfect victims for noblesse oblige. Subordinate white classes in particular, unable to imitate the model on a grand scale, could still bolster their claims of hereditary superiority by pointing to the obviously poorer Negroes.

In truth, of course, there has never been a truly hereditary elite in the South. Each generation has seen some turnover in the ranks, with the "new rich" successfully establishing themselves or their children firmly within the ruling class, where they in turn defended the myth against the next usurpers.

As historians have frequently noted, there was never more than a small minority of the total population in the class that for so long dominated the region socially, economically, and politically — namely, the plantation aristocracy and its town derivatives.

But when the Civil War crippled the Plantation South as a reality, the myth became stronger than ever—a symbol of past glory, present pride, and future aspiration for new leaders who rose from the ruins and profits of war and reconstruction. The idea of an hereditary elite continued to dominate the psychology of the whole region.

Until recently, a certain agrarian stability in Southern society has helped to maintain the mythology. All elements were basically folk peoples, even when they lived in urban centers. Under such circumstances, each group had a sense of common goals and values which permeated all aspects of a life that was lived on terms of personal intimacy with others of one's kind. Neighbors were "our kind of folks." Even distinctive subgroups were at least "our people"—"our workers" or "our Negroes."

Marion Pearsall
Southern Anthropologist

But this has been crumbling since World War II with the rise of new industry and the displacement of rural population by mechanization and other revolutionary developments in agriculture.

A new instability and unpredictability has emerged. This is true of all relationships, but it is presently most evident in the anxieties surrounding relations between the races. Today there are doubts about the "myth" as the position of the Negro changes.

In the past Negroes were in no position educationally, economically, or legally to question the old mythology. Today many of them are able to resist, and the whites know it.

As always when changes threaten some powerful social myth, its followers cling to it more emotionally than ever. In a desperate attempt to defend their "way," many whites grasp at the one remaining objective difference between the races—color. To the biological fact of color they ascribe every inferior social or cultural characteristic, in effect denying that learning plays any part in human development.

Given such a premise about the overwhelming importance of heredity, the term "mongrelization" is sufficiently terrifying to make any step toward equal rights seem only a prelude to racial suicide. The last recourse for people of this conviction is violence. That is the danger in the South today.

But there is evidence that other elements in the Southern picture may eventually prove stronger. As community after community faces up to the implications of unrestricted violence, the appeals to a traditional respect for law and order become louder. If these voices prevail, the South will enter a new phase. Putting aside the myth that any group is superior by heredity, the South can then develop all of its human resources to advantage.

School desegregation in the South is "grinding to a halt," Will Maslow, American Jewish Congress general counsel, told a congressional hearing, reporting on a recent AJC survey.

* * * *

The Kansas Legislature passed a law making it illegal for hotels, motels, restaurants and other public eating places to refuse service because of color. Colorado adopted a law prohibiting discrimination in sale or rental of property.

Bits of History: 'On the Mountains Is Freedom'

By DON WEST

On February 25, 1815, a sober band of mountain men met in the Lost Creek meeting house in Jefferson County, Tenn. They were men whose hands knew the feel of the plow-handles and whose hearts knew the feel for the hurt of a fellow human. They were men who stood for something, and they were willing to pay the price for daring to challenge the evil of an established (and sacred) institution. They were native Southerners in a slave state.

Among these men were John Canady, John Swain, Charles Osborn, Elihu Swain, John Underhill, Jesse Wills, David Maulsby, and Thomas Morgan. They declared themselves to be "The Tennessee Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves."

"We whose names are hereunto subscribed," they wrote in a brief constitution, "having met for the purpose of taking into consideration the case of the people of color held in bondage in our highly favored land, are of opinion that their case calls aloud for the attention and sympathy of Columbia's free-born sons, and for their exertion in endeavoring . . . to procure for that oppressed part of the community that inestimable jewel, Freedom . . ."

The constitution provided that each member have an advertisement in the most conspicuous part of his house saying, "Freedom is the natural right of all men; I therefore acknowledge myself a member of the Tennessee Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves."

Unlike some of the later New England abolitionists, these Southerners believed in political action. Their constitution stated that no member should vote for "governor, or any legislator, unless we believe him to be in favor of emancipation."

This was the mother organization which eventually spread, particularly throughout the Appalachian South, and to other parts of the nation. These were the kind of Southerners that history books ignore. These were the men who caused the Tennessee Constitutional Convention of 1834 to be flooded by petitions from the East Tennessee mountains urging immediate emancipation.

And later it was this spirit and love for freedom which caused the Mountain South to stand almost to a man for the Union, East Tennessee sending more *volunteers* into the Lincoln Freedom Army than any state, South or North!

Quotations To Remember

"I predict it will be a stepping stone to higher ground."—**The Rev. Calvin W. Wood,** Birmingham Negro minister, commenting on the six-month jail sentence he received for urging his congregation to stay off the city's segregated busses.

"To speak the phrase, 'Close the schools,' means a previous process of closing the mind has been completed."—**Atlanta Constitution Editor Ralph McGill.**

"I am tainted with prejudice, but one thing is more important to me than my prejudice and that is the education of my children. In this I feel that I am not alone."—**The Rev. A. Jason Shirah,** Waycross, Ga., Methodist minister in open letter to the Governor.

"The first time a 'Chet Huntley' (NBC commentator who suggested that the NAACP withdraw from the desegregation crisis) tells you that you . . . are pushing too hard, too fast, ask him to *write down* what rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States he is willing to give up for himself, his wife and his children . . ."—**UN Correspondent Charles P. Howard,** Sr., in a column in *The Carolina Times.*

"I am convinced that the mob which beat and kicked me . . . had become aware that their system is a lost cause. Government exclusively of the whites, for the whites, and by the whites can only perish from the earth."—**Asbury Howard,** Negro union leader on chain gang in Bessemer, Ala., as quoted in *Nashville Globe.*

Eyes on Congress

By MARJORIE SMITH ZENGEL

(New Orleans Attorney & SCEF Assistant Secretary)

A number of civil rights bills are before the present Congress. The ultimate ideal in this field is the full guarantee of constitutional rights, elimination of factors inhibiting free exercise of these rights, and effective proscription of discrimination.

The present proposals, in varying degrees, attack limited and conspicuous aspects of this field. Comment here touches a few of the key measures.

In regard to desegregation of schools, technical and financial assistance programs are included in the administration and in the Celler-Douglas bills.

In situations where the various factions involved are seriously interested in moving towards a solution, this assistance could be of great value. But in those localities where opinion is divergent and adamant, the value of such programs is problematical.

In the realm of freedom from fear and intimidation, the administration proposes criminal penalties for activity aimed at impeding the execution of federal desegregation decrees. The bombings of schools and synagogues have inspired several bills, providing punitive measures and investigative assistance. One of these bills also covers such violence against individual homes, a vital addition.

To further the protection of the right to vote, the administration proposes compulsory preservation for three years of voting and election records relating to federal elections, and access to them by the Justice Department. The Johnson bill includes a similar subpoena provision. These appear to be steps in the right direction, but, as a practical matter, they seem very small steps, indeed, toward effective implementation of the national citizenship established in the Fourteenth Amendment.

The Celler-Douglas bill contains provision for federally initiated equitable action, and for intervention in civil rights lawsuits. Such a measure had administration support in 1957; it no longer has it—a reversal difficult to understand.

The public interest is such that protection of constitutional rights, in these days of reprisals and intimidation, should not have to be dependent on the fortuitous chance that one whose rights have been violated might possess the funds, time and the high courage necessary to defend them.

One administration measure would provide schooling for children of armed forces personnel in areas where state schools are closed to avoid integration.

This last bill raises a question fundamental to the very preservation of our way of life. It is axiomatic that the success of a democratic system of government depends on the existence of a literate and informed electorate. It has also long been assumed as axiomatic that every child in the United States is entitled to a minimal, free, tax-supported education. While the latter has a cogent moral sanction, recent events have made it clear that it lacks a legal one. What, then, is our responsibility, as a people, under our Constitution, towards ourselves, as well as towards all those children whose schooling is now jeopardized under various state statutes calling for school closure in the face of a federal integration decree?

A Quick Look at Some Recent Literature

CASTE, CLASS & RACE, A Study in Social Dynamics, by DR. OLIVER CROMWELL COX, Monthly Review Press, 66 Barrow St., New York 14, N. Y., $7.50.

This classic study of social caste, class distinction, and racial friction was first published in 1948 by Doubleday. Events since then have shown the validity of many of its conclusions.

Republication of the book in 1959 is most timely in view of the growing drive of the world's have-nots for equality and their place in the sun. Dr. Cox, sociology professor at Lincoln University in Missouri and a member of the SCEF advisory committee, declares:

"The problem of racial exploitation, then, will most probably be settled as part of the world proletarian struggle for democracy; every advance for the masses will be an actual or potential advance for the colored people."

Dr. Cox's book is worthy of serious study by all seeking knowledge about racial friction and its solution. The book is already used as reference material in many college courses.

Stockett, Afro-American

"That guy must have been looking over my shoulder."

Oliver C. Cox

THAT DUNBAR BOY, The Story of America's Famous Negro Poet, by JEAN GOULD, Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, $3.00.

One day toward the end of the last century, a young man was hanging head down from a second story window of a Dayton, Ohio, building. His name was Orville Wright and he was trying to install a sign announcing the opening of the Wright Brothers' printing shop. One of those holding Orville's feet was a high-school classmate, Paul Lawrence Dunbar.

Within a few years, these two would be numbered among Dayton's most distinguished citizens. The Wright brothers became immortal by flying the first airplane. Dunbar became America's best known Negro poet, acclaimed at home and abroad.

In 1906 at the youthful age of 34, Dunbar's brilliant career was brought to a tragic end by tuberculosis.

Miss Gould is a writer of juvenile books and this biography of a sensitive and appealing youth was intended primarily for teenagers, but it will be enjoyed by readers of all ages.

PROFILE IN BLACK AND WHITE, a frank portrait of South Carolina, by HAROLD H. QUINT, Public Affairs Press, Washington, D. C., $4.50.

This is the story of the deterioration of race relations in South Carolina in the four-year period that followed the United States Supreme Court ruling, May 17, 1954, outlawing segregation in public schools.

Because the story is put together with great skill, largely in the actual words of the people concerned, both white and colored, one has the impression after reading the book that "you were there," that you had met and talked with these real people in all walks of life.

Although the book deals only with South Carolina it is representative of the situation existing in the other four states of the Deep South, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia, where defiance of the Supreme Court ruling runs strongest.

Book Ban

(Continued from Page 1)

it's wrong to segregate white and colored people."

And that about sums up what officials in Mississippi and South Carolina don't want their children to read.

In Washington, D. C., charges that school integration has increased delinquency were conclusively contradicted by a report issued by the Welfare Department. It showed that from 1954 through 1958, the delinquency rate among Negroes between the ages of 5 to 17 dropped from 37.1 per thousand to 21.2. Among whites, it dropped from 15.3 to 15.2.

E. D. Nixon Continues Long, Hard Fight for Freedom

(Continued from Page 1)

against his people, constant organizing of committees. He was always contacting people, talking, talking—often in the face of apathy and fear— to inspire intimidated fellow-citizens to resist the oppression that had beaten them to the earth.

He himself sums up his approach to social action in these words: "It's not how much you holler; it's what you do."

Physically, Nixon is a big man, six feet, three inches tall with broad shoulders. There is an expression of calm sureness on his face that inspires confidence in all who know him.

Deprived of an extensive formal education, as were many Negroes of his generation, Nixon educated himself by reading, travel and experience — so that in recent years Ph.D.'s and lawyers with whom he works have commented with awe on his ability and know-how. As one lawyer said, "I would never have known how to handle that case without his help."

Nixon, an SCEF board member, was born in Montgomery in 1899, the son of a minister. From the time he was 8, he worked at various jobs to help support himself and his family. When he was 23 be became a sleeping-car porter, a job he has held for 36 years.

It was in the late 1920's that Nixon took his first action for social reform. Two Negro boys drowned in a ditch which was their only swimming place in Montgomery. Nixon organized a campaign to get the city to provide a pool for Negroes.

That effort failed but from then on Nixon was working to improve the lot of his people. He fought for and got federal money to set up recreation facilities for Negroes in Montgomery; he organized the Montgomery Welfare League to get relief for Negroes during the Depression. He also organized the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Montgomery Division, and has been its only president.

"I was always organizing something," he says in summary.

Around 1940, Nixon began organizing his people to register and vote. In an intensive campaign in 1944, for example, he had 750 Negroes before the Board of Registrars in a two-day period. His own experience points up the difficulty they faced.

"I tried to register at least three times a year for ten years before they finally gave me a certificate," he says. "That was after I had filed one suit and threatened to file another."

For two years he served as state NAACP president and for six years as president of the Montgomery Branch. The membership in the branch rose from 478 to 2,256.

"At that time, our main fight wasn't for integration," he recalls. "We were struggling to win justice for Negroes in the courts. We handled many cases."

These included instances of police brutality against Negroes, cases of Negroes unjustly accused of rape, white men unapprehended for raping Negro women, insults on the busses. Nixon patiently gathered the evidence and brought the cases to court, appeared before the governor, circulated petitions.

It is of interest that he always had the support of a few white people. Some would call to give him evidence in brutality cases—afraid to do anything themselves but hoping he would. There were always 15 or 20 white women, he recalls, whom he could get to attend court and express their support when an important case was docketed.

And Nixon, rightly, demands more than talk from white people who claim to be his friends. He tells of one white woman who once called him to deplore an injustice to a Negro.

"Now there's no use your saying all this to me," he says he told her. "You aren't going to talk to your preacher or talk to your club or do anything. You just want to clear your conscience with me."

Nixon didn't win all the cases he took to court, but something else happened.

"The Negroes came to see they were not alone," he says; "they knew they could be heard in the courts."

Thus through the years it came to be Nixon to whom Montgomery Negroes turned when there was trouble. When Mrs. Rosa Parks was arrested in 1955 for sitting in a segregated bus seat, it was only natural that it was this man she called. Nixon began organizing people to stay off the busses; he called Dr. King and the Rev. Ralph Abernathy to enlist help. The rest is history.

Nixon served as treasurer of the Montgomery Improvement Association throughout the protest and until last year. Today, almost 60, he continues his steady work for freedom, devoting much of his time to voter registration work.

When his house was bombed, along with several others during the bus protest, Nixon was not dismayed. He had been living with threats of death for a generation.

"You just get used to it," he says.

By his side throughout his long and productive career has been his wife, a native of Pensacola, Fla. They will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary this summer. Mrs. Nixon has worked with him, traveled with him, risked death with him.

Once when a mob threatened, Nixon offered to send his wife to Pensacola for safety.

"No," she said, "if you die, I want to die with you."

Throughout history, it has been the people not afraid to die who have lived lives of significance. Mr. and Mrs. Nixon are that kind of people.